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ABSTRACT

As minority group students in teacher education programs continue to decline, minority group students are increasing in many of America's public schools. This paper reviews the literature related to reasons for declining enrollments of minorities in teacher education programs. Some of the reasons discussed are: the transfer of block grant programs to state control thereby losing a national focus; a dearth of minority teacher role models; reliance on the Pre-Professional Skills Test and the National Teacher Examination for which minority students are poorly prepared; ineffective recruitment techniques in post-secondary education; and low entry level salaries. A strategic implementation plan presents an approach to reverse the problem of a dwindling number of minorities majoring in teacher education, outlining both the role of community level collaboration (church, community, college or university, and public schools) and the role of college or university leadership. Appendixes include tables graphically displaying the following information: first-time entering freshman enrollment in selected universities in Arkansas; freshman enrollment in selected Arkansas colleges by sex and ethnicity, Fall 1991-92; and first-time entering freshman enrollment by public two-year institutions in Arkansas. (Contains 16 references.) (LL)

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# TEACHER DIVERSITY: STRATEGIES TO INCREASE MINORITIES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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**Teacher Diversity: Strategies to Increase**

**Minorities in Teacher Education**

## Introduction

Will there be minority teachers to teach in America's Schools by the year 2000? The answer to this question should be a resounding yes. However, should the trend continue minority teachers will be a scarce group by the year 2000. There seems to be an inverse relation in existence. As minority students continue to decline in America's teacher education programs, minority students are increasing in many of America's public schools. Thus, for many of these students to have real hope for a successful life or career, they will need to see themselves in the individuals who are leading in the schools and classrooms.

When Blacks as a minority group are considered, it appears that Black participation in college life peaked about the mid-1970's. For instance, Wilson (1988) reported that most demographic indicators identify 1976 as the approximate peak year of Black participation in all levels of higher education. With a 25% increase in high school graduation rate, from 1976 to 1982, Blacks declined 11% in participation in undergraduate education, Wilson and Melendex (1985). Blacks must go to college to have a chance at becoming a teacher. There are many questions to be asked in regard to why there is a decline in the number of Minority students in teacher education programs. Some of these questions are as follows:

1. Is it that Minority students feel other professions provide more upward mobility than teaching?

2. Is it that minority students do not see as many role models in upper level professional education jobs as they once did?
3. Is it that entry level teaching salaries are too low to attract Minority students to a teaching major?
4. Is it a lack of or ineffective recruitment techniques by teacher education colleges to interest minority students in teaching?
5. Is it that the fear of passing the PPST and the NTE serve to discourage minority students from entering teacher education?
6. Is it that the available pool in each college/university has too few minority students?

**Available Pool**

Some studies report the available pool of Black students in colleges and universities to be declining. In 1976, 33.5% of Black high school graduates between the ages of 18 and 24 were enrolled in college; this percentage was comparable to that for White high school graduates, Graham (1987). By 1983, according to Graham, only 27% of Black high school graduates in that age group were enrolled in college. Astin (1982) and Marks (1984) reported that the secondary school graduation rates of minority students increased between 1975 and 1983 but they have not been matched by an increase in college attendance.

This paper will review related literature on the above mentioned questions, summarize implementation strategies and offer a strategic plan to address the problem

of a dwindling number of minorities majoring in teacher education. The strategic plan will offer a dynamic approach to reverse the declining presence of minorities in education.

Table 1, 2, and 3 of this paper show the first-time freshmen enrollment for Blacks and White students in ten (10) of the largest state supported universities in Arkansas. Table 2 and 3 also show a breakdown of this population according to sex. When the total first-time Black freshmen enrollment is analyzed for 1989, 1990, and 1991 in Table 1, the enrollment data show an increase in Black student enrollment for the three year period. For example, the total Black first-time entering Freshmen enrollment over the three consecutive year period was as follows: Fall 1989 - 1907, Fall 1990 - 1892, Fall 1991 - 2062. Thus, as these figures plainly reveal the Black first-time-entering freshmen available pool has grown. Therefore, it seems obvious to me that it is the responsibility of teacher education colleges to determine and design strategies to attract more minority students from the available pool into teacher education programs. (See Appendix A and B, Table 1, 2, and 3).

An analysis of the data for the Fall 1991 and Fall 1992 shows that more black females than Black males and more White females than White males are enrolling in the first-time freshman available pool. For example, there were 808 Black males, 1074 Black females, 3504 White males and 3884 White females. The Fall 1992 data show similiar figures. There were 880 Black males, 1146 Black females, 3823 White males and 4232 White females. This data suggest that having access to both Black and White

males for careers in education may be difficult because the available pool is less for males than females.

The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) reported the number of Blacks entering four-year colleges is decreasing. When two-year college enrollment is compared to four-year college enrollment, it appears that too many Black students enroll in two-year colleges. For example, Blacks in 1976 accounted for 8.5% of four-year college enrollment and only 8% in 1984, but, according to Graham, 42% of all Black college students attended two-year colleges. Though a few of these students may go on to a four-year college, most are in deadend programs, which do not prepare students to study for a baccalaureate degree.

Table 4 shows First-Time-Entering Freshmen Enrollment by race in public two-year institutions in Arkansas. It appears that two-year colleges have an available pool of minority students. Black student first-time enrollment in two-year colleges over a three consecutive year period were as follows: Fall 1989 - 659, Fall 1990 - 613, and Fall 1991 - 569. Though the first-time-entering freshmen enrollment declined for Black students over the three year period and increased for White students, the figures still suggest that two-year colleges are good sources to attract and interest students in teacher education programs. Therefore, with the appropriate recruitment strategy, teacher education universities can use two-year colleges as an available pool to increase minority enrollment in teaching majors. (See Appendix C, Table 4).

## Block Granting Programs

Some writers feel that **"block granting programs"**, transferring programs from the federal control to state control affected minority participation in college. When the programs were block granted they lost their national focus. Many of the funding appropriations were cut for programs which directly supported elementary and secondary schooling for the under-represented. Such cuts in funding affected the many services rendered on behalf of minorities and were followed by a drop in the number of graduating high school students entering colleges, Arbeiter (1987), Braddock (1981). Thus it is obvious when programs that support higher education opportunities for minorities are cut, fewer minorities will be available for the field of education.

## Role Models

According to Middleton and et al. (1988), it is possible with the dwindling minority teacher representation that a minority student could complete the K-12 school experience and never meet a minority teacher. This in my view, is not good for a minority student's school experience. Many minority students may have low aspirations for school work because they can not see themselves in a tangible manner in the worthy professions, which includes teaching. Graham (1987) stated that there is justifiable concern that minority students would benefit more directly from a teacher role model when the teacher is a member of the students' own minority group.

Blacks must be seen by Black students or all students as intelligent, capable worthy, and contributing citizens in our schools, in our communities, in our cities, and

in the U.S. Blacks who are seen by Black students in this way become role models for these students. Waters (1989) reported that these models are doubly important for Black children, since black teachers and administrators are the "significant others" -- persons who act as appropriate role models and are capable of enhancing the self-concept of the young Blacks. Waters (1989) also reported in a survey of Black administrators she has reviewed that 70 of these respondents felt children performed better academically in black schools with Black teachers. Nevertheless, these findings are being reported when black students are in need of the greatest self-assuring and academic support and Black teachers are vanishing as role models in our public schools.

## Passing The PPST and NTE

The Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) and the National Teacher Examination (NTE) became reform practices of the 80's implemented supposedly to improve the quality of teachers in the classrooms. The PPST is a test used by many teacher education colleges to determine admittance readiness to study in the field of education. The NTE is a test used by many states to determine a student's eligibility to teach after completing a baccalaureate teacher education program. According to Webb (1986), Currently more than half the states require aspiring teachers to pass a state-prescribed test either before entering a teacher education program or before being certified to teach. It appears that these practices in teacher education colleges have become acceptable ways to reform with little or no concern for equity. These are "gatekeeping" practices.

During the 1980's several states reported high failure rates for Black candidates on the NTE. For instance, Dupre (1986) reported that in Florida 80 to 85 percent of all those who took the test passed, but the passing rate for Black candidates was only 35 to 40 percent.

Some studies have focused on entry level basic competencies to study teacher education. Gifford (1985) in a study of 6,644 minority candidates in California in 1985, who took the basic skills competency test given to prospective teacher education students, 3,854 (58 percent) failed. It is not a secret why Blacks or minorities are not prepared adequately for basic skill competency test used to determine entry into teacher education programs. We all know, it is because many minority students receive a very poor academic preparation in elementary, junior high, and high school.

Colleges and universities are not blameless in this problem. These institutions of higher learning prepared the teachers who are failing to equip a significant number of black students with the basic skill competencies to enter into teacher education. It is also conceivable that we have trained and/or training teachers who do not have the skill capacity to teach students who come from economically poor communities.

Since we have implemented "gatekeeping" practices at the entry and exit level in teacher training programs to assure quality in a classroom teacher and the basic skill competencies of a significant number of minority student needs are not met, the focus perhaps for quality in the classroom should shift to include other more compassionate teacher characteristics beyond objective test performance. Waters (1989) reported in an article written by Post and Woessner that other teacher characteristics beyond objective

test performance have been ignored in a rush of testing. These characteristics are humaneness, inventiveness, energy, perseverance, self-confidence, the ability to work well with people, and a sense of humor. Quality in the classrooms in the absence of equity in the classroom cannot lead to excellence in the classroom. Perhaps Webb (1986) said it best, "the net effect of using competency test to improve teacher quality is thus to reduce minority representation in the profession."

## Ineffective Recruitment Techniques

Since minority teachers are becoming more and more extinct each year it is obvious that what is being done is ineffective. Ineffective recruitment techniques are effecting minority enrollment in post-secondary education. Wiley (1991) reported that according to the American Council on Education (ACE), between 1987 and 1988, the total number of 18 to 24 year old African Americans enrolled in post-secondary education dropped from 823,000 to 752,000. It was also reported that during the same period the nation's 117 historically and predominantly Black institutions, where a fifth of African American students are enrolled, experienced a 10 percent increase in enrollment. Thus if it is possible to enroll or attract more African American students in historically and predominantly Black colleges and universities, it is possible to enroll more minority students in teacher education. Waters (1989) noted that active recruitment efforts are necessary in order to attract Blacks to teaching. An active recruitment effort to attract minorities to teaching must be carried out in both predominantly Black and white colleges and universities.

There are several strategies reported to have an impact on attracting Blacks to teaching. Many of these strategies seem to take pages out of the past. They are as follows: (1) future teachers clubs; (2) alumni contact; (3) colleges engage in high school and junior high visitation, using present education students, bring high school counselors to campus and the media.

## Low Entry Level Salary

Some writers have indicated that low entry level salaries are keeping a significant number of minorities from the teaching field. Hawley (1986) reported that low salaries relative to industry and other occupations are keeping minorities from the teaching field. It appears too that many Black students have been told other professional fields offer better pay, more opportunity for career advancement and higher social status. Waters (1989) reported that this is true for women and Blacks because previously teaching was often the only career that welcomed them.

Blacks might have given up on teaching as far back as the early 1970's. During this period, there was an oversupply of teachers. This is also the period when desegregating our public schools peaked, which might have resulted into poor working conditions for some Black teachers. Prospective teacher education students may have observed these conditions and decided that teaching is not for them. The crux of the matter seems to be that many able Blacks look more broadly at employment and no longer feel constrained to seek teaching jobs, Graham (1987).

## Summary of Implementation Strategies

After reviewing the literature on issues relating to the lack of minorities in teacher education programs, it is evident to the writer that six implementation strategies should be incorporated in a plan to address the problem. These implemtation strategies are as follows:

1. Early identification and recruitment of minority high school students who are interested in teaching as a career as part of a special university based, pre-professional teacher preparation program.

   Example of Concept: Teachers of Tomorrow Program

2. Use financial incentives - scholarships and forgivable loans.
3. More effective counseling at stages when career decisions are made.
4. Design a recruitment program aimed at attracting minority students.
5. Remove rigidity and add flexibility to admission procedures to teacher preparation programs.
6. Develop real enabling programs in teacher education to help those minority students with interest in teaching to overcome "gate-keeping" teacher education reform practices.

## Strategic Plan

### I. Community Level Collaboration (Church, Community, College or University, and Public Schools)

It is likely that any strategy to increase the number of minorities in teacher education without involving the church, community organizations, elementary and secondary schools will fizzle out long before the job is complete. Colleges and universities must also understand that it takes time and commitment to change attitudes. Henniger (1989) stated that because of the time commitment necessary to change attitudes and be truly successful in recruiting minority students into teacher education, we run the risk of having interest and enthusiasm wane long before the task is complete. According to Middleton, Mason and et al. (1988), colleges of education wishing to be successful in their minority recruitment efforts must seek students several years before they are ready seriously to consider higher education and a career in teaching, or the battle is lost. For this reason, university teacher education officials, in implementing Phase I of this plan, are required to organize, plan, collaborate, bring about awareness, emphasize opportunities in education to minority church education groups, minority social groups, YMCA and YWCA, minority recreation groups and minorities in elementary and secondary schools.

For this phase of the plan to yield fruits, universities must collaborate with community institutions that attract minority individuals.

## II. College and University Phase

The second phase of the plan is implemented in the college or university. The teacher education faculty must take the lead to bring this phase of the plan to fruition. It is at this phase that teacher education faculty must really play a significant part with awareness training and helping to develop academic support systems for minority students. It is also at this level where we will have to dig deep within our hearts for real commitment and support for this plan.

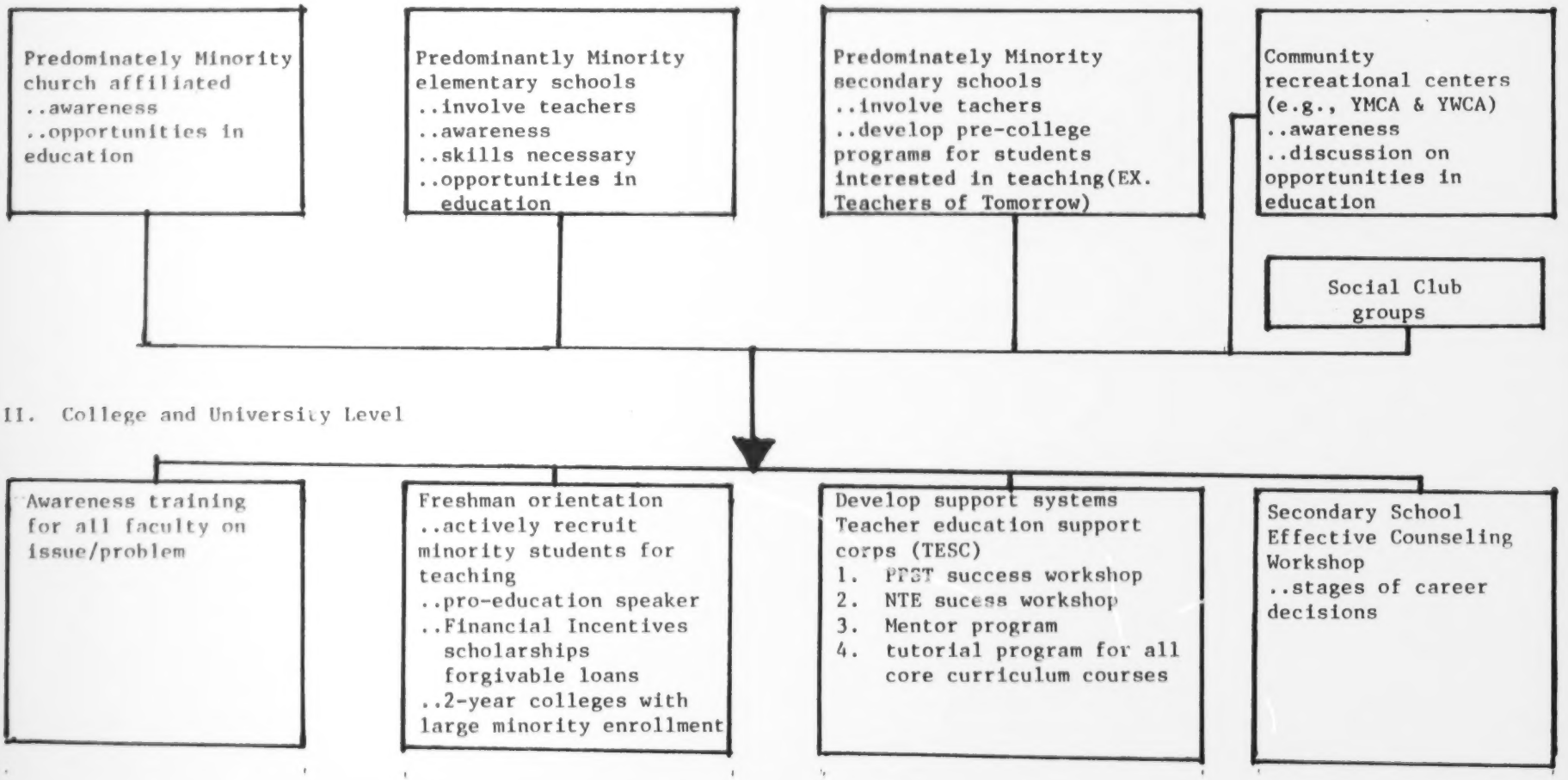
We must keep in mind the decline of minorities in teacher education is a real problem. This problem is not just going to go away. It will take all the force and leverage that can be applied to the problem from all of us to eliminate the problem. Thus, if we really believe in educational opportunity and equity, we want all children/students to see themselves in all professions -- including teaching.

Another reason the college or university phase of this plan is so critical because it helps to address a central problem of minorities or Blacks in American public schools. As Graham (1987) stated that the central problem is that Blacks in the U.S. are not getting as good an education as whites are and the education that whites are getting is not good enough. Therefore, teacher education colleges and universities must develop academic support systems for Black students interested in teaching to overcome the impediments of PPST, NTE, and a weak or deficient public school experience.

To address the problem of a declining enrollment of minorities in teacher education, implementation strategies have been developed at two levels for College and University leadership. These strategies to increase the minority enrollment in teacher education are as diagramed on the following page.

# IMPLEMENTATIONS STRATEGIES FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF MINORITIES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

I. Community Level Collaboration
(church, community, college, university and public schools)



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# APPENDIX A

## TABLE 1

### FIRST-TIME ENTERING FRESHMAN ENROLLMENT IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN ARKANSAS

| | Fall 1989 | | Fall 1990 | | Fall 1991 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Institution | Black | White | Black | White | Black | White |
| ASU | 220 | 1440 | 211 | 1251 | 269 | 1327 |
| ATU | 37 | 825 | 23 | 804 | 22 | 783 |
| HSU | 140 | 595 | 128 | 555 | 131 | 597 |
| SAU | 94 | 359 | 115 | 352 | 166 | 459 |
| UAF | 145 | 2289 | 178 | 2077 | 200 | 2046 |
| UALR | 203 | 1058 | 179 | 1043 | 210 | 892 |
| UAM | 60 | 399 | 69 | 423 | 93 | 410 |
| UAMS | 1 | 11 | 1 | 27 | 0 | 14 |
| UAPB | 769 | 76 | 756 | 105 | 601 | 79 |
| UCA | 238 | 1546 | 232 | 1849 | 370 | 1602 |
| TOTALS | 1907 | 8598 | 1892 | 8486 | 2062 | 8209 |

# APPENDIX B

## TABLE 2

### FRESHMAN ENROLLMENT IN SELECTED ARKANSAS COLLEGES BY SEX AND ETHNICITY

| FALL 1991 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| COLLEGES | BM | BF | TOTAL | WM | WF | TOTAL |
| UCA | 134 | 236 | 370 | 710 | 892 | 1602 |
| UA | 103 | 97 | 200 | 1096 | 950 | 2046 |
| ASU | 123 | 146 | 269 | 604 | 723 | 1327 |
| UAPB | 266 | 365 | 631 | 45 | 64 | 109 |
| UAM | 45 | 48 | 93 | 182 | 228 | 410 |
| SAU | 81 | 85 | 166 | 203 | 256 | 459 |
| ATU | 10 | 12 | 22 | 367 | 416 | 738 |
| HSU | 46 | 85 | 131 | 297 | 300 | 591 |
| TOTAL | 808 | 1074 | 1882 | 3504 | 3884 | 7303 |

## TABLE 3

### FRESHMAN ENROLLMENT IN SELECTED ARKANSAS COLLEGES BY SEX AND ETHNICITY

| FALL 1992 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| COLLEGES | BM | BF | TOTAL | WM | WF | TOTAL |
| UCA | 101 | 174 | 275 | 664 | 892 | 1602 |
| UA | 101 | 96 | 197 | 1074 | 950 | 2046 |
| ASU | 138 | 167 | 305 | 625 | 723 | 1327 |
| UAPB | 282 | 323 | 605 | 61 | 64 | 109 |
| UAM | 58 | 50 | 108 | 216 | 228 | 410 |
| SAU | 56 | 77 | 133 | 174 | 256 | 459 |
| ATU | 12 | 11 | 23 | 349 | 416 | 738 |
| HSU | 70 | 70 | 140 | 286 | 300 | 591 |
| UALR | 62 | 178 | 240 | 394 | 400 | 794 |
| TOTAL | 880 | 1146 | 2026 | 3823 | 4232 | 8055 |

# APPENDIX C

TABLE 4

## FIRST-TIME ENTERING FRESHMAN ENROLLMENT BY PUBLIC TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS IN ARKANSAS

| | Fall 1989 | | Fall 1990 | | Fall 1991 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Institution | Black | White | Black | White | Black | White |
| ASUB | 30 | 442 | 34 | 427 | 17 | 494 |
| EACC | 131 | 202 | 145 | 274 | 150 | 243 |
| GCCC | 31 | 470 | 37 | 534 | 47 | 544 |
| MCCC | 99 | 330 | 83 | 309 | 76 | 179 |
| NACC | 0 | 361 | 0 | 362 | 0 | 386 |
| NWACC | | | 2 | 453 | 2 | 828 |
| PCCC | 227 | 255 | 197 | 225 | 171 | 229 |
| RMCC | 0 | 164 | 0 | 113 | 0 | 151 |
| SAUE | 42 | 152 | 39 | 163 | 31 | 168 |
| SAUT | 53 | 270 | 47 | 119 | 35 | 122 |
| WCC | 46 | 1049 | 29 | 1155 | 40 | 908 |
| **TOTALS** | 659 | 3675 | 613 | 4129 | 569 | 4252 |

ASUB = Arkansas State University-Beebe
EACC = East Arkansas Community College
GCCC = Garland County Community College
MCCC = Mississippi County Community College
NACC = North Arkansas Community College
NWACC = Northwest Arkansas Community College
PCCC = Phillips County Community College
RMCC = Rich Mountain Community College
SAUE = Southern Arkansas University-East
SAUT = Southern Arkansas University-Tech Station
WCC = Westark Community College